PLEASE AMEND THE SPECIFICATION AS FOLLOWS:

In the Specification:

A1 --This application claims the benefits of U. S. Provisional Application Serial Number 60/154,117, filed on September 15,1999 and is a National Stage Filing of PCT/US00/24743, having an International Filing Date of September 11, 2000.--

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 12, 13 and 14.

Please replace Claim 1 with the clean version presented below:

B2 A2 1. (AMENDED) A purified and isolated polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

(b) a polynucleotide which is complementary to the polynucleotide of (a),

(c) a polynucleotide that hybridizes with a polynucleotide of (a) or (b) under stringent conditions.

Please replace Claim 8 with the clean version presented below:

B1 A3 8. (AMENDED) A purified and isolated polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Please replace Claim 9 with the clean version presented below:

9. (AMENDED) A method of determining whether a candidate compound is an inhibitor of a *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* MurE polypeptide comprising:

(a) providing at least one host cell harboring an expression vector that includes a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, and

(b) contacting at least one of said cells with the candidate to permit the interaction of the candidate with the MurE polypeptide, and

(c) determining whether the candidate is an inhibitor of the MurE polypeptide by ascertaining the relative activity of the polypeptide in the presence of the candidate.

Please replace Claim 15 with the clean version presented below:

15. (AMENDED) A method of determining whether a candidate compound is an inhibitor of a *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* MurE polypeptide comprising:

(a) providing a sample that includes a MurE polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, and

(b) contacting said sample with the candidate to permit the interaction of the candidate with the MurE polypeptide, and

(c) determining whether the candidate is an inhibitor of the MurE polypeptide by ascertaining the relative activity of the MurE polypeptide in the presence of the candidate.